

Summary of Draft Amendments to DEM Rules and Regulations for Groundwater Quality

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's Office of Water Resources is planning to go to public notice with proposed amendments to the "Rules and Regulations for Groundwater Quality" within the next two months. Some of the more significant proposed amendments being considered are listed below:

- New facilities that require DEM permits for treatment, storage and transfer of hazardous waste will be prohibited where the groundwater is classified GAA, within any public wellhead protection area, and where the groundwater is classified GA and public water is not available to surrounding properties.
- Road Salt – Stockpiles of road salt must be covered where groundwater is classified GA or GAA.
- Groundwater Classification
 - Non-attainment area designation will be deleted from the rules.
 - The Groundwater Classification Map has been revised with relatively minor changes.
- Groundwater Quality Certification
 - The groundwater quality certification requirement will be deleted for all but two of the Department approvals currently listed in the regulations (large septic systems and upland disposal of dredge taken from freshwater).
 - The criteria for large septic systems to be subject to the groundwater quality certification requirements will be decreased from 10,000 gallons per day to 5,000 gallons per day.
- Wellhead Protection
 - An updated Wellhead Protection Area map has been developed adding new public wells and deleting those no longer in service. In addition, DEM evaluated the original delineation methods resulting in wellhead protection areas for bedrock wells being limited only to circles (size of the circle will depend on the well's pumping rate) and no change to the approach for wells in stratified drift.
 - The requirement for large water suppliers and municipalities to conduct WHP inventory and prepare plans will be replaced with other planning requirements (Water Supply System Management Plans and local Comprehensive Plans), provided that DEM approves of the relevant sections of the plans that are submitted.
- Monitoring Well Construction Standards
 - Minor changes to these minimum standards to make them consistent in most all instances with the standards issued by the American Society for Testing and Materials.
 - Construction standards will be included for wells installed using direct push methods.

Watch for the draft rules and a detailed summary on the DEM website at the time of public notice.